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Garth Ennis Darick Robertson

The BOYS™

THIRTY-FIVE

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The BOYS™

THIRTY-FIVE

In a world where costumed heroes soar through the sky and masked vigilantes prowl the night, someone's got to make sure the "supes" don't get out of line. And someone will.

Billy Butcher, Wee Hughie, Mother's Milk, The Frenchman and The Female are The Boys: a CIA-backed team of very dangerous people, each one dedicated to the struggle against the most lethal force on Earth- superpower. Some superheroes have to be watched. Some have to be controlled. And some of them- sometimes- need to be taken out of the picture.

That's when you call in **The Boys**.

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THE BOYS, VOLUME 1 #35. First printing. Published by Dynamite Entertainment, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite B, Runnemede, NJ 08078.

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Printed in Canada.

NOTHING LIKE IT IN THE WORLD

part one

HOW'S IT GOIN'?
IT'S GOIN'.
THAT ARM STILL HURTIN' YOU?
NAH, I WAS OUT WI' VAS TO ABOUT FOUR IN THE MORNIN'. I FEEL FUCKIN' SHITE.
IT'S GOOD THEY'VE FINALLY STARTED WORKIN' ON IT, ISN'T IT?
YEAH.

GOOD THEY REBUILDIN' IT LIKE IT WAS, TOO.

NEW DESIGNS I SAW WERE BULLSHIT. AN' THAT IDEA 'BOUT LEAVIN' THE RUINS BE, GODDAMN, LIKE TWO CHAINED-UP CORPSES KNEELIN' IN THE RIVER...

'WHY I HATE ALL THAT SHIT 'BOUT WHICH NAME GOES ON WHAT MEMORIAL, FIRST RESPONDERS OR WHOEVER NEED A VOICE, WE SUFFERED MORE'N YOU DID...S'POSED TO BE A ***ANSWER,*** YOU KNOW?

ANSWER TO THE MUTHAFUCKIN' TERRORISTS. YOU HIT US? FUCK YOU.

WE ARE NEW YORK CITY.

YOU HIT US, WE GONNA GET RIGHT BACK UP AN' KEEP GOIN'.

HMH.

YOU KNOW I'M THE ONLY ONE OF US IS A NEW YORKER?

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE OF US IS A SEPTIC AT ALL.

YOU BEEN SPENDIN' TOO LONG AROUND HIM, HUGHIE.

YOU KNOW I WAS ON THE BRIDGE ON THE DAY?

YOU--

ON THE DAY IT--

YOU WERE *HERE*...?

OTHER THING 'BOUT ME, I GUESS, IS I'M THE ONLY ONE BORN TO THIS SHIT.

MEANIN' I COME INTO THE WORLD WITH IT RUNNIN' IN MY VEINS.

YOU AN' BUTCHER AN' FRENCHIE, THREE A' YOU GOT THE SHOT. FEMALE...WELL, SHIT HAPPENED TO HER WHEN SHE'S A BABY, NOT BEFORE.

I WAS V-ED UP AT CONCEPTION. NEVER HAD A CHOICE OR A CHANCE.

WHAT WAS IT YOU WAS ASKIN'?

NOTHIN', NO, NO, YOU CARRY ON--!

I WAS BORN ON ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIFTH STREET IN HARLEM, IN NINETEEN SIXTY-NINE.

HERE. MY MOM, MY POPS, MY BROTHER MICHAEL AN' ME.

GIANTS

OH, UH...

MICHAEL WAS RETARDED.

I ALMOST DIED A COUPLE TIMES, 'FORE I WAS EVEN TWO.

TIME COME TO WEAN ME OFF THE TIT, I STARTED TO KINDA SHRIVEL UP. HEART SLOWED DOWN. COULDN'T SEE OR HEAR. DOCTORS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS.

FOOD, LIQUID, MEDS, NOTHIN' MADE ANY KINDA DIFFERENCE AT ALL...

"SO, MOMMA GOT SCARED ENOUGH TO PUT ME BACK TO THE TIT."

"COUPLE DAYS A' THAT AN' IT WAS LIKE NOTHIN' EVER HAPPENED. I WAS HEALTHY AN' HAPPY AS I EVER WAS.

"SIX MONTHS GO BY AN' SHE TRIES TO WEAN ME AGAIN, AN' I DRY UP LIKE A CORN HUSK. SO THIN IN THE PICTURES I LOOK LIKE I GOT POLIO. MOMMA DOES WHAT COMES NATURAL AN' I'M GOOD IN NO TIME AT ALL.

"THIRD GO-ROUND MY HEART STOPS. AFTER THAT, MOMMA GETS THE MESSAGE."

"NOW, I DON'T WANT YOU THINKIN' I HAD SOME KINDA FUCKED-UP CHILDHOOD. OKAY, I NEEDED WHAT I NEEDED TO LIVE, BUT THAT DON'T MEAN I COULD NEVER GO OUT OR NOTHIN'.

"HAD TO GO AWAY, MAYBE VISIT MY COUSINS IN B-MORE, MOMMA JUST MADE ME UP A COUPLE BOTTLES. STAYED FOR LONGER, SHE SENT ME MORE IN THE MAIL. NOT LIKE GETTIN' IT STRAIGHT FROM HER, BUT IT WAS ENOUGH 'TIL I COME HOME...

"NO ONE KNEW BUT ME AN' HER AN' POPS. SO NO PROBLEM."

ANYHOW.

"THE REASON ME AN' MICHAEL WAS LIKE WE WAS HAD TO DO WITH MOM, ONLY SHE WASN'T THE ONE TO BLAME. BACK BEFORE SHE MET POPS SHE WORKED IN A CANNIN' PLANT OVER IN NEWARK, MADE DOGFOOD AN' OTHER SHIT LIKE THAT...

"AN' IT WAS OWNED BY VOUGHT-AMERICAN, BY ONE A' THE OUTFITS IN THEIR COMMERCIAL PRODUCE DIVISION. AN' ***BEFORE*** IT WAS A FACTORY, THEY USED THE BUILDIN' TO HOUSE A LABORATORY...

"WHERE THE SUPERHUMAN DEVELOPMENT DIVISION WAS FUCKIN' AROUND WITH COMPOUND V."

DIDN'T SANITIZE THE PLACE BEFORE THEY SHUT DOWN. DIDN'T RUN CHECKS ON THE AIR OR THE WATER. DIDN'T DO A GODDAMN THING.

JUST TOSSED THE KEYS TO THE PRODUCE DUDES, SAID--DO WHAT THE FUCK YOU LIKE.

BY NOW YOU KNOW THAT *V* IS SERIOUS SHIT. REFINE IT RIGHT, GET ***REAL*** LUCKY, AN' YOU MIGHT JUST GET THE HOMELANDER--AN' EVEN THEN, YOU BETTER BE JONAH FUCKIN' VOGELBAUM. YOU GOTTA START ON THE ASSHOLE INSIDE A TEST TUBE, TOO.

MORE LIKELY YOU GONNA GET WHAT YOU GOT, WHICH COSTS...?

THE LEGEND TOLD ME NINETEEN BILLION A GO.

UH-HUH.

GET IT ***UNREFINED***, LIKE IN THE ENVIRONMENT, AN' ONE TIME IN TEN THOUSAND YOU GONNA TURN OUT A AVERAGE SORRY-ASS SUPE. RESTA THE TIME? CANCER, HEART DISEASE, MISCARRIAGE, BRAIN DAMAGE, ORGANS SHRINKIN' AWAY, LIMBS QUITTIN' ON YOU...

WORSE...

I DUNNO EXACTLY WHAT THEY WAS DOIN' IN THIS PLACE. MALLORY USED TO HAVE A THEORY 'BOUT THEM TRYNNA SIMPLIFY REFINEMENT FOR MASS PRODUCTION, SO AS TO BRING THAT NINETEEN BILLION DOWN A LITTLE--HE WAS THE ONE STOLE THE SUPPLY THE C.I.A. KEEP FOR DUDES LIKE YOU, HE GENERALLY KNEW HIS SHIT.

THAT WAS IT, I GUESS IT DIDN'T WORK OUT.

ABOUT MALLORY...

NOT TODAY.

WHATEVER THEY WAS DOIN' THERE, MICHAEL GOT WHAT HE GOT AN' I GOT WHAT I GOT. AN' THE OTHER WOMEN WORKED ALONGSIDE MOM, MOSTA THEM GOT THAT SHIT I JUST MENTIONED.

ALL THREE HUNDRED OF 'EM.

AIN'T NO I-WILL-USE-MY-AMAZING-POWERS-FOR-MANKIND IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, I GUESS.

"ENTER POPS."

HE WAS A SMART MAN. DIDN'T START OUT THAT WAY, NOT HOW YOU MIGHT UNDERSTAND THE WORD-- 'CAUSE OF HIS CIRCUMSTANCES HE DIDN'T GET NO PROPER EDUCATION OR OPPORTUNITIES. BUT HE HAD WHAT HE CALLED SUSPICIONS, ABOUT WHAT COULD BE DONE IN THE WORLD IF YOU COME AT IT THE RIGHT WAY, IF YOU FOUND THE PROPER PLACE TO START.

WHERE HE FOUND HIS WAS IN PRISON.

NOW HE WASN'T INNOCENT; HE ADMITTED TO ME HE DONE SOME STUPID SHIT. BUT THE JUDGE GAVE HIM A SENTENCE YOU'RE S'POSED TO GET FOR KILLIN' MUTHAFUCKAS, NOT SLINGIN' DOPE TO SOME COLUMBIA PROFESSOR.

SO POPS GOES TO RYKER'S AN' HE RUNS ACROSS SOMETHIN' HE NEVER HAD NO CAUSE TO VISIT IN HIS LIFE, WHICH IS A LIBRARY. AN' *CLICK:* ALL THAT POTENTIAL INSIDE THAT HEADA HIS, IT UNLOCKS JUST LIKE THAT.

TAKES TIME. LOTTA READIN', LOTTA PRACTISIN'. LOTTA FRUSTRATION AN' FALSE STARTS.

BUT HE CONDUCTS HIS OWN APPEAL AN' HE GETS OUT IN FOUR YEARS AN' HE MEETS MY MOM RIGHT AFTER, AN' IF HE HADN'TA BEEN THE KINDA SMART HE WAS I WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE NOW.

CAN'T SLEEP, LITTLE MAN?

'CHOO DOIN', POPS?

I'M DOIN' WHAT'S CALLED PREPARIN' OUR CASE.

GONNA SEE IF I CAN MAKE THE PEOPLE MOMMA USED TO WORK FOR PAY.

WHAT FOR?

FOR WHAT THEY DONE TO HER AN' YOU AN' MICHAEL.

HE TOLD ME 'BOUT FILIN' REQUESTS, AN' COLLECTIN' RECORDS, AN' SUBMITTIN' APPEALS, AN' DISCOVERY, AN' ENOUGH OTHER SHIT TO START MY LITTLE HEAD SPINNIN'.

HE SAID HOW EVEN BEFORE YOU GOT TO COURT YOU HAD A FIGHT ON YOUR HANDS ANYHOW, 'CAUSE SOME A' THE FOLKS YOU TRYNNA FIGHT FOR MIGHT NOT WANNA KNOW. MORE PLAINTIFFS THERE ARE THE BETTER IT PLAYS, BUT OF THEM THREE HUNDRED WOMEN--THE ONES STILL LIVIN'-- SOME WERE TOO BEAT AN' SOME WERE JUST TOO ***DUMB*** TO TAKE THE SHOT.

...AN' THE LAST THING IS, WE UP AGAINST IT HERE. AIN'T NOBODY GONNA ***GIVE US*** NOTHIN'.

SO WE GONNA CHECK, AN' WE GONNA CHECK, AN' WE GONNA CHECK AGAIN. WE GONNA THINK OF ***EVERYTHING,*** 'CAUSE YOU CAN BET THEY GOT PEOPLE ON THEIR SIDE DOIN' THE SAME RIGHT NOW.

WE GONNA FIGURE EVERY SINGLE WAY TO COME AT THIS THING, SO IF WE LOSE THIS TIME WE GONNA HIT 'EM ANOTHER WAY THE NEXT.

HE WOULDA BEEN A LAWYER IF HE COULD, BUT HIS JAIL TIME MEANT HE HADDA HIRE SOME HUMP INSTEAD. STILL ENDED UP WITH HIM DOIN' MOSTA THE WORK.

NEVER GONNA FORGET HIS DAY IN COURT:

"HIM AN' HIS LEGAL TEAM ON ONE SIDE..."

"VOUGHT AMERICAN'S ON THE OTHER."

THEY HIT HIM WITH ***EVERYTHING.*** EVERY TRICK, EVERY LOOPHOLE, EVERY PIECE A' LEGAL BULLSHIT-- I MEAN THE RESOURCES THESE MUTHAFUCKAS GOT, THEY CAN AFFORD TO TIE SHIT UP FOREVER.

FUCKIN' WAR CRY OF EVERY GODDAMN CORPORATION ON THE PLANET: YOU'RE RIGHT, WE'RE WRONG, SO SUE US.

WASN'T TOO HARD TO SEE WHAT SIDE THE JUDGE WAS ON, NEITHER. POPS LOST AN' HE LOST AN ' HE LOST, I MEAN THIS THING TOOK ***YEARS***...

BUT EVENTUALLY, LIKE I THINK THE EIGHTH OR NINTH WAY HE FOUND TO HIT 'EM...MAYBE 'CAUSE THE PRESS GOT INTERESTED...MAYBE 'CAUSE POOR FOLKS DIDN'T HAVE THE SAME APPETITE FOR EATIN' SHIT BACK THEN...MAYBE JUST 'CAUSE POPS HAPPENED TO BE FUCKIN' ***RIGHT***...

HE WON.

"NOT MUCH OF A PAYOUT. NO CHANCE EVEN ONE A' THE ASSHOLES AT VOUGHT MIGHT GO TO JAIL. BUT WHAT THE FUCK, SCORE ONE FOR THE LITTLE GUY, RIGHT?

"THEIR LAWYERS COME PAST US ON THE WAY OUT. I HEARD ONE OF 'EM SAY SOMETHIN', STAYED WITH ME EVER SINCE."

WIN SOME, LOSE SOME.

"WIN SOME, LOSE SOME. THIS SHIT ATE UP POPS' LIFE FOR FIVE YEARS. THERE WAS IT AN' HIS JOB AN' *US,* I MEAN HE STILL FOUND TIME FOR US--BUT TO THESE MUTHAFUCKAS IT'S NO MORE'N WIN SOME, LOSE SOME.

"I NEVER ONCE TOLD HIM I HEARD THAT."

COCKSUCKIN'... FUCKIN'...

THEY EXHAUSTED THAT MAN. THEY TOOK EVERYTHING BUT THE LAST GODDAMN INCH OF HIS HEART.

HHHH.

ANYHOW.

"ME AN' MICHAEL, WE WAS NOTHIN' SPECIAL BACK THEN.

"I MEAN HE GOT HIS THING AN' I GOT MINE, BUT THERE AIN'T NO MORE TO IT THAN THAT. THE V DONE ALL THE DAMAGE IT'S GONNA.

"BUT YOU KNOW THE THING ABOUT *SUPERPOWERS,* HUGHIE? THEY CAN KICK IN AT JUST THE *WORST* GODDAMN TIME."

TOUCHDOWN!

HEEEEEE!!

HEEEE! HEEEE! HHEEEEEEEE!

YOU WANNA PLAY, POPS?

OH, NO. YOUNG MAN'S GAME, SON.

C'MON!

NOW, BABY, YOUR FATHER'S TIRED OUT...

HEEEEEEEEEEEEE--

MIKEY?

EEEEEEIIIIIIEEEEEEEEE!!!

MIIIKEEEEYYY!!

GET THE HELMET OFF HIM! GET IT OFF!

EEEEIIIIEEEEE

EEEEE--!

"THING LIKE THAT...YOU FELT LIKE YOU WAS UP AGAINST THE POWER OF GOD."

"WHICH WASN'T GONNA STOP POPS, UH-UH. NOT LONG AFTER THE FUNERAL HE GOT OUT HIS BOOKS AN' HIS FILES, AN' HE WENT BACK TO WORK: TRYNNA FIGURE A WAY TO MAKE VOUGHT PAY FOR HIS BOY.

"SAME SLOW, CAREFUL, METHODICAL SHIT AS BEFORE. CHECKIN' AN' CHECKIN' AN' CHECKIN'. PLAYIN' DEVIL'S ADVOCATE WITH HIMSELF 'TIL DAWN, HE USED TO SAY."

I WAS KINDA CAUGHT UP IN MY OWN SHIT AROUND THEN. I WAS ***SCARED:*** IF WHAT HAPPENED TO MICHAEL HAPPENED TO HIM, WHAT KINDA FUCKIN' BOMB MIGHT BE TICKIN' AWAY INSIDE ME?

AN' I GUESS I WAS SO CAUGHT UP, I DIDN'T SEE HOW SHIT HAD AFFECTED MY FOLKS. DIDN'T SEE MOMMA WAS...JUST BEATEN.

AN' POPS WAS SET TO FIGHT, ALL RIGHT, 'CEPT HE DIDN'T HAVE A WHOLE LOT LEFT TO DO IT WITH.

"THEY TOOK THAT LAST INCH, IN THE END."

I'M REALLY SORRY...

YOU'DA LIKED HIM, HUGHIE.

THERE AIN'T ENOUGHA HIS KIND NO MORE.

AFTERWARDS I TOLD MOMMA WE HADDA CARRY ON THE FIGHT OURSELVES. FOR MICHAEL AN' POPS--WE COULDN'T LET 'EM DOWN, WE HADDA MAKE SURE THE PEOPLE DID THAT SHIT *PAID.*

SAME AGAIN, TOO CAUGHT UP TO SEE WHAT COUNTED. HER WEIGHT WAS AFFECTIN' HER MORE AN' MORE--EVENTUALLY IT GOT SO SHE COULDN'T LEAVE THE APARTMENT, I HADDA HIRE A NURSE TO TAKE CARE A' HER. BUT RIGHT THEN...

BABY--

I JUST DON'T *WANNA* FIGHT NO MORE.

I GUESS IT KINDA STOPPED ME IN MY TRACKS.

I MEAN WHAT ABOUT MICHAEL?

WHAT ABOUT POPS?

BUT IN THE END IT MADE ME PULL MY HEAD OUTTA MY ASS.

THE WOMAN'D DONE SO MUCH FOR ME. NEVER MADE NO BIG DEAL OUTTA IT, NEVER LET ON HOW SICK SHE WAS OR WHAT KINDA PAIN SHE WAS IN.

ANYTHIN' I DID AFTER THAT, I FIGURED IT HADDA BE FOR HER.

THIS IS WHEN YOU JOINED THE ARMY, AYE?

SHERLOCK HOMIE.

"MOMMA HAD ALL KINDSA BILLS NEEDED PAYIN', AN' I WASN'T QUALIFIED TO DO MUCH MORE'N BUS TABLES. BUT UNCLE SAM AIN'T NEVER BEEN TOO PICKY WHEN IT COMES TO DUDES LIKE ME.

"LATER ON I GOT MYSELF A WIFE AN' DAUGHTER--TELL YOU MORE 'BOUT THEM SOON--AN' A WHOLE OTHER SET A' MONEY PROBLEMS TO GO WITH 'EM. WHICH IS HOW COME I VOLUNTEERED TO JOIN THE RANGERS."

"I WAS PRETTY BIG BY THEN, WHICH IS HOW COME THE SERGEANT RUNNIN' THE BATTALION BOXIN' TEAM NOTICED ME.

"HOW COME I ENDED UP IN THE ARMY HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP, TOO."

"HOW COME I WAS EVER ***DUMB ENOUGH*** TO GET IN THE RING WITH A DUDE CALLED ***FUCKER JOHN***-- THAT MIGHT TAKE A LITTLE MORE EXPLAININ'."

...GOTTA FUCKIN' END THIS THING, THAT GUY IS GONNA *KILL YOU*--

UH-UH.

REF'S GONNA STOP IT ANYWAY, SHIT, HE *CAN'T* LET THIS GO ON--

UH-UH.

I CANNOT FUCKIN' LOOK.

FUNNY THING.

I WASN'T THINKIN' 'BOUT KEEPIN' MY GUARD UP, OR WATCHIN' FOR A OPENIN', OR ANY A' THE SHIT YOU S'POSED TO DO--I THINK I WAS *DOIN' IT*, BUT I ONLY KNEW THAT IN A KINDA FAR-OFF WAY.

"I WAS THINKIN'-- THINK OF EVERYTHING."

"FIGURE EVERY SINGLE WAY."

"LOSE THIS TIME, WE GONNA HIT 'EM ANOTHER WAY THE NEXT."

YOU REMEMBER THE THING I SAID ABOUT SUPERPOWERS?

...OH, SHIT.

JESUS CHRIST...

DID NOT FUCKIN' SHOW UP.

WHO DID WAS KINDA THE EXACT OPPOSITE.

ALL RIGHT, MATE?

BILLY BUTCHER. HE'S GREG MALLORY.

DON'T HAVE TO GET UP, YOU AIN'T IN THE ARMY NO MORE.

DISMISSED, CORPORAL.

YESSIR!

I...I AIN'T?

NAH.

BUT--

COME ON, WHO'S GONNA WANNA BE IN YOUR PLATOON? "CHUCK US ME RIFLE, WILL YOU, MATE? OH FUCK, HE'S BUNGED IT THROUGH ME HEAD."

JUST BEEN HAVIN' A DEKKO AT YOUR FILE, HERE.

THAT'S DIABOLICAL, WHAT HAPPENED TO MICHAEL. AN' YOUR POOR OL' DAD, FUCK ME...

OH, SORRY, MATE. NOT YOUR SERVICE JACKET.

THIS ONE.

VA

THAT AIN'T IN THERE! HOW THE FUCK IS THAT IN THERE, I NEVER SAID SHIT ABOUT THAT!

WHAT THE *FUCK*--

WE NICKED IT.

WHAT?!

MUTHAFUCKA, YOU BEST NOT BE MESSIN' WITH ME! THAT'S MY GODDAMN FAMILY! THAT SHIT IS MY GODDAMN *LIFE!*

THEM VOUGHT COCKSUCKAS KEEPIN' EYES ON ME? THEY KNEW THIS SHIT WAS COMIN' DOWN, YOU FUCKIN' COME TO *COLLECT ME FOR 'EM? HUH?!*

NAH, WE AIN'T.

YEAH, THEY WAS.

THEY WATCH EVERY POOR BASTARD STUCK IN YOUR SHOES. GOT YOUR WHOLE FAMILY HISTORY.

'COS THEY KNOW SOONER OR LATER SOMETHIN'S GONNA HAPPEN, AN' WHEN IT DOES THEY WANNA BE READY TO SNAP YOU UP AN' STICK A CAPE ON YOU.

OR MORE LIKELY JUST HAVE YOU DONE NICE AN' QUIET, AVOID THE EMBARASSMENT AN' THAT...

CAPE?

LISTEN-- WHADDA YOU *WANT*--?

WE KEEP AN' EAR TO THE GROUND TOO. FOR THINGS LIKE THIS. TRY AN' GET IN AHEADA VOUGHT, IF WE CAN.

HELPED YOU BEIN' IN THE MILITARY, THAT GAVE US A BIT OF A HEAD START.

SO...

WELL, WE WANNA TALK TO YOU, MY SON.

YOU WANNA HULK OUT AN' BEND THE BARS, OR WILL I JUST OPEN THE DOOR?

AN' THEN WE HAD A LONG, LONG CONVERSATION. BUT I GUESS YOU KNOW HOW THAT GOES.

AYE...

LISTEN, BEFORE YOU GO ON, THERE'S SOMETHIN' I'M SORTA WONDERIN' ABOUT...

I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKIN', BUT--YOU KNOW THIS THING YOU HAD? WHERE...YOU KNOW...YOU'D SORTA LIKE ***SHRIVEL UP*** IF YOU DIDN'T GO TO YOUR MUM?

IF YOU DIDN'T...YOU KNOW... GET...

WELL WHAT I'M WONDERIN' IS, DO YOU STILL HAVE TO--

YOU WANNA COFFEE?

EH?

GET ME ONE TOO.

JINGS...!

next: VALE OF TEARS